

OUR TRIUMPH AND OUR DUTIES.

Mr. Jay's Remarks

AT THE CELEBRATION DINNER OF THE EAST BROOKLYN UNION CAMPAIGN CLUB, AT THE PIERREPONT HOUSE, BROOKLYN, ON
THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 22, 1864.

THE members of the East Brooklyn Campaign Club, one of the most efficient and active of the Union organizations, celebrated by a dinner the Presidential Victory of the 8th of November. About an hundred of the representative men of Brooklyn, as stated by the *Brooklyn Union*, assembled, and entered, with great enthusiasm, into the festivities of the occasion.

The first regular toast having been given by S. J. EASTMAN, Esq., the President of the Club,—

“OUR CIVIL VICTORY: Sublime in the fidelity with which it was fought, as it was far-reaching in its consequences. It was the test struggle of the great nation whose life it saved and whose prosperity it secures.”

JOHN JAY, Esq., was called upon to respond, and, being received with warm applause, spoke as follows :

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN :

I most cordially thank you for this kind reception. I appreciate more highly than I can express the honour conferred upon me, when I am asked to respond to this first toast, “Our Civil Victory,” by those whose well directed and earnest efforts contributed so much to its achievement.

Ours was the victory, not of a faction, but of a people; not of a section but of a country; nor of this country alone, but of the

friends of freedom throughout the world. It was the triumph, not of partisan dogmas, but of law, order and Christianity. It was a victory whose influence is not for a day but for all time.

It was, as your toast declares, the test struggle of this great nation, and when the sun rose on the 9th of November, and we learned that the vote of the majority of the American people had been cast for union and for freedom, and that the disappointed minority quietly acquiesced in the constitutional will of the nation: we knew that our ocean-girt Republic, instead of being blotted out in blood, was to stand in its majestic strength united and free, ready to sway by its moral influence feudal Europe on the one side and barbaric Asia on the other.

In emerging triumphantly, as we are about to do, from this dark passage in our history, it will not be uninteresting to reflect that this war, inaugurated to perpetuate SLAVERY, will end in EMANCIPATION; that the Southern rebels and Northern traitors who conspired to make Slavery the corner-stone of a new empire, have thrown all former anti-slavery effort into the shade, and proved themselves the most immediate and practical of abolitionists.

Nor is it unpleasant to remember that the foreign governments who, in the hope of compassing our destruction, have encouraged and prolonged this rebellion, thereby compelling us to put forth our full strength, will have added immensely to the completeness of our triumph; and that we shall, perhaps, owe to their interference, the grandest features of our future career, a more perfect union, a more intense nationality, an universal freedom, and all the blessings of peace, happiness and culture that naturally follow in their train.

We have gained new faith in the unity and destiny of our country, as one that "Providence will not let die," although set upon by all the powers of Europe, aided by the subtle influences, which have striven in vain to uphold slavery and secession.

We have learned to feel, and we have taught the world to recognize the fact, that the American Constitution which Washington declared was intended to secure "the consolidation of our Union," and to extinguish what with prophetic vision he denounced as "that monster," State Sovereignty,—which even now

is devouring our children and ravaging our country—we have learned that that Constitution, in its wonderful adaptability, is as well fitted for war as for peace, and that the Government it establishes is—as the Rebel Vice-President Stephens declared before he attempted to destroy it—the noblest Government in the world.

But we have learned also that no constitution, however perfect, will secure a nation in its rights without a sleepless patriotism on the part of the people, and it is to their virtue and vigilance that we owe the victory we are met to celebrate, and we must not forget that our success has imposed upon us new and solemn duties. The responsibilities of the war are with us, and we may be sure that not only our opponents but the world and posterity will hold us to the strictest accountability.

In looking at the election of Mr. Lincoln we are struck with the thought that a more generous confidence was never exhibited by any people—that a larger constitutional power was never possessed by any government. Mr. Lincoln, no longer a minority President, holds his seat by a popular majority without a precedent. He is sustained by a working majority in the present Congress, and by a majority in the incoming House of Representatives, while the legislatures and executives of nearly all the loyal States stand ready to second his rightful efforts to crush the rebellion and to restore the Union.

And now with such eminent opportunities for success, we are to recognize and avoid the errors of the past.

The military situation is eminently satisfactory. The triumphant march of Sherman, gathering by the way an army of recruits; the admirable co-operation of Foster's forces, embracing one of our coloured regiments from New York—the gallant Twenty-sixth; the brilliantly victorious career of Thomas scattering far and wide the army of Hood; the joint naval expedition of Porter and Butler; the call for 300,000 men, all show that the President recognizes and obeys the demand of the country for sharp, thorough and decisive action, and that our gallant soldiers in the field are to be promptly reinforced.

With the suppression of the rebellion and the reconstruction of our old Union there will come, throughout the sunny South, by this rebel war and an amendment to the Constitution, the

substitution of free homesteads for slave plantations, and what a blessed vista that thought opens to the imagination !

But, gentlemen, there are grave questions which immediately concern us, and whose importance is nowhere better appreciated than in these sister cities of Brooklyn and New York, which together constitute the largest national centre of trade and commerce. Prominent among these questions are our national finances and our foreign policy.

Recognizing with pride and gratitude the eminent ability and services of the late and present Secretaries of the Treasury, and their successful refutation of the prediction of the *London Times*, that the war on our part would stop from the want of money, we cannot shut our eyes to the dangers that threaten us in the near future.

With resources so boundless, and a power of recuperation so marvellous, that burdens which would crush other nations we can carry with ease, we still cannot afford to double and treble these burdens, by blundering about the principles of finance, and raising the cost of the necessaries of life by too widely enlarging the volume and depreciating the value of the currency, especially when the Government is the largest purchaser in the market, and the labouring classes most heavily feel the pressure.

Nor it is becoming that the National Government of this Republic, stronger to-day than any despotism in Europe, should be put to shifts for raising money. The country demands a tax so large in amount as to establish firmly the National credit, and at the same time that it be laid with as much regard as possible to evenness of pressure and convenience and economy in the collection.

In regard to our Foreign Relations, the popular branch of Congress has exhibited serious concern at the seemingly timid tone of our foreign diplomacy—a tone so novel in American history, and so little in harmony with the American character.

Due force must be allowed to the explanation given for this excess of caution, that we could not afford to have two wars on our hands at once, and that we were bound to defeat the rebel design of involving us with England or with France. But now

that the extreme exigency is passed, and victory attends our banners and foreshadows our national restoration, it will, doubtless, be felt at Washington, as clearly as it is throughout the country, that firmness in demanding our rights, and frankness in avowing when the occasion demands it, our ancestral predilections, if not our hereditary policy, is after all the best mode of arousing in those governments that wholesome feeling of respect, which is the surest guarantee of peace.

To insure a proper observance of our rights, we must be prepared not merely to solicit but to enforce them. A meek acquiescence in foreign encroachments will never elevate us in the world's regard, nor can the effect of submission in one case, be removed by exhibiting uncommon bravery in another.

England has taught us a great lesson in the matter of the iron-clads, whose piratical ravages she viewed with apparent complacency, and for whose detention she could find no warrant, till Mr. Adams said, with quiet dignity, "This is war."

France, also, has taught us a lesson which we cannot forget when we recall the assurances of M. Thonvenel, that French troops did not go to Mexico to interfere with the existing form of government, and then mark the manner of their fulfillment by an Austrian prince, guarded by French bayonets, claiming to rule that neighbouring soil which our fathers declared ought never again to be trodden by the propagandists of European despotism.

Sooner or later, and perhaps very speedily, we must encounter openly foreign hostility, embracing, it may be, Protestant England and Catholic France, and forming a holy alliance for our destruction. Let us now so wisely act, that when that struggle shall come, the issue on our part shall be clear and just—so that not only the party of progress in England, but all the friends of freedom on the Continent—and their name is legion—will be compelled to sympathize with the free Republic which aristocratic jealousy would destroy.

Neither England nor France will make haste to strike at republicanism in America, if they know that the rebound of the blow will precipitate a revolution in their own homes.

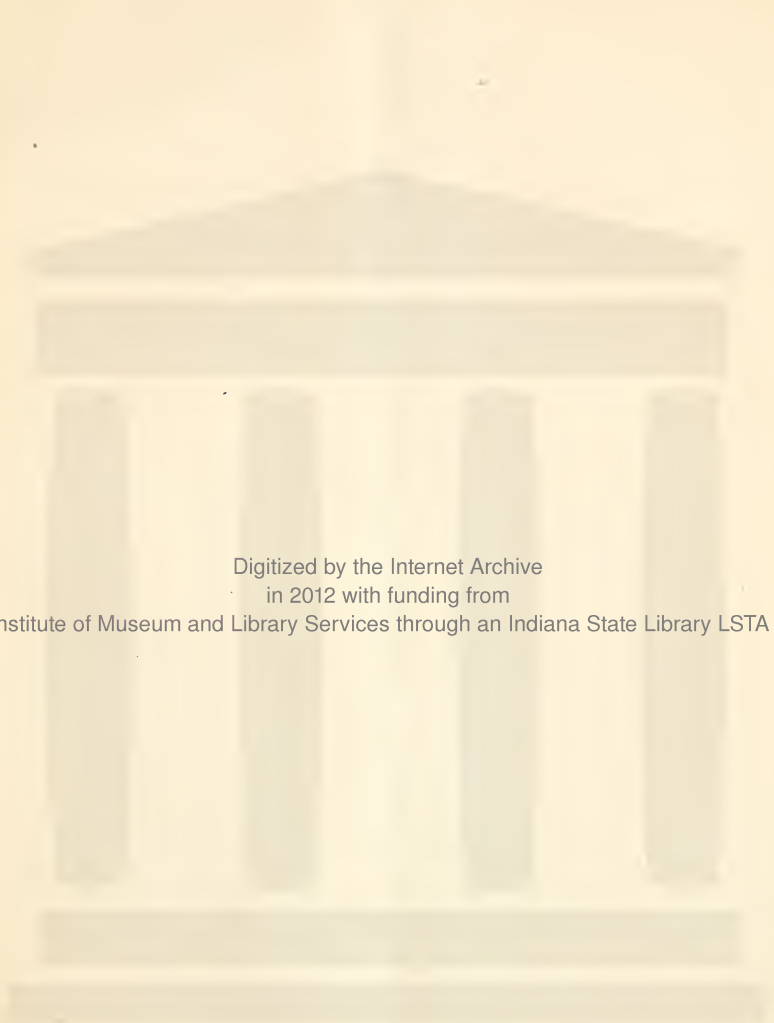
All that our government has to do is to be just and wise, and fear not; and in its domestic policy, let it trust the patriotic instincts of the people—let it stand by the men who have faith-

fully sustained its principles, and avoid entanglement with the unprincipled cliques, who in the midst of war will sustain their government for a consideration.

We lost this Empire State, in 1862, by the treachery of an immoral faction that betrayed the party it pretended to support, defeating the heroic Wadsworth, and electing in his stead Horatio Seymour.

Of the demoralization which resulted from that betrayal of our true-hearted leader, who has since fallen in the field, fighting for the country he loved so well, I need not speak, save to remark that in its encouragement of the rebellion, its prolongation of the war, its increase of our national debt, its cruel waste of the blood of our sons and brothers, its incitement to the New York riots of sixty-three, it furnished a warning not to be slighted, of the responsibility that would devolve on a government which in a crisis like this, instead of relying with confidence on the unbought patriotism of the people, should bid for the support of venal politicians, and lean on the betraying arm of a treacherous faction.

Let the nation be true to itself, and the Government true to the nation, and the brightest future is before us that ever opened upon any people : and our old flag, with its starry constellation undiminished and undimmed, will be recognized wherever it shall wave, as the flag of freedom and the fitting emblem of the Star of Empire.



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